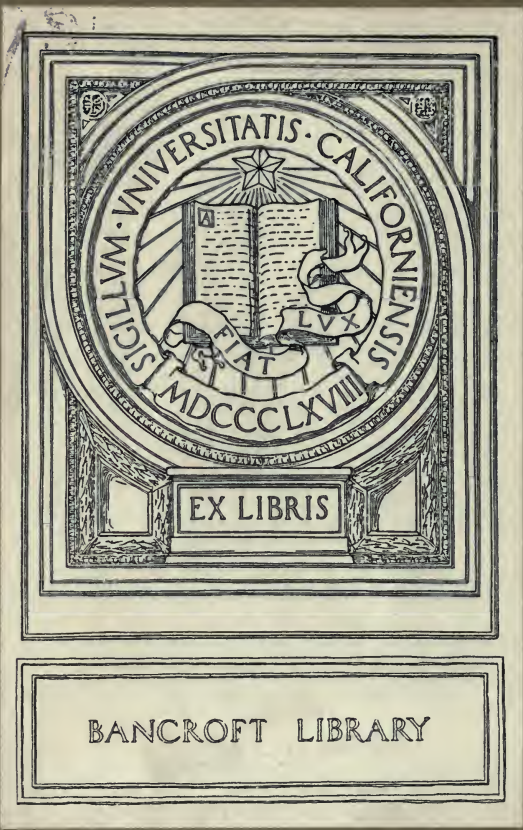


Pratt. Necessity for miracles

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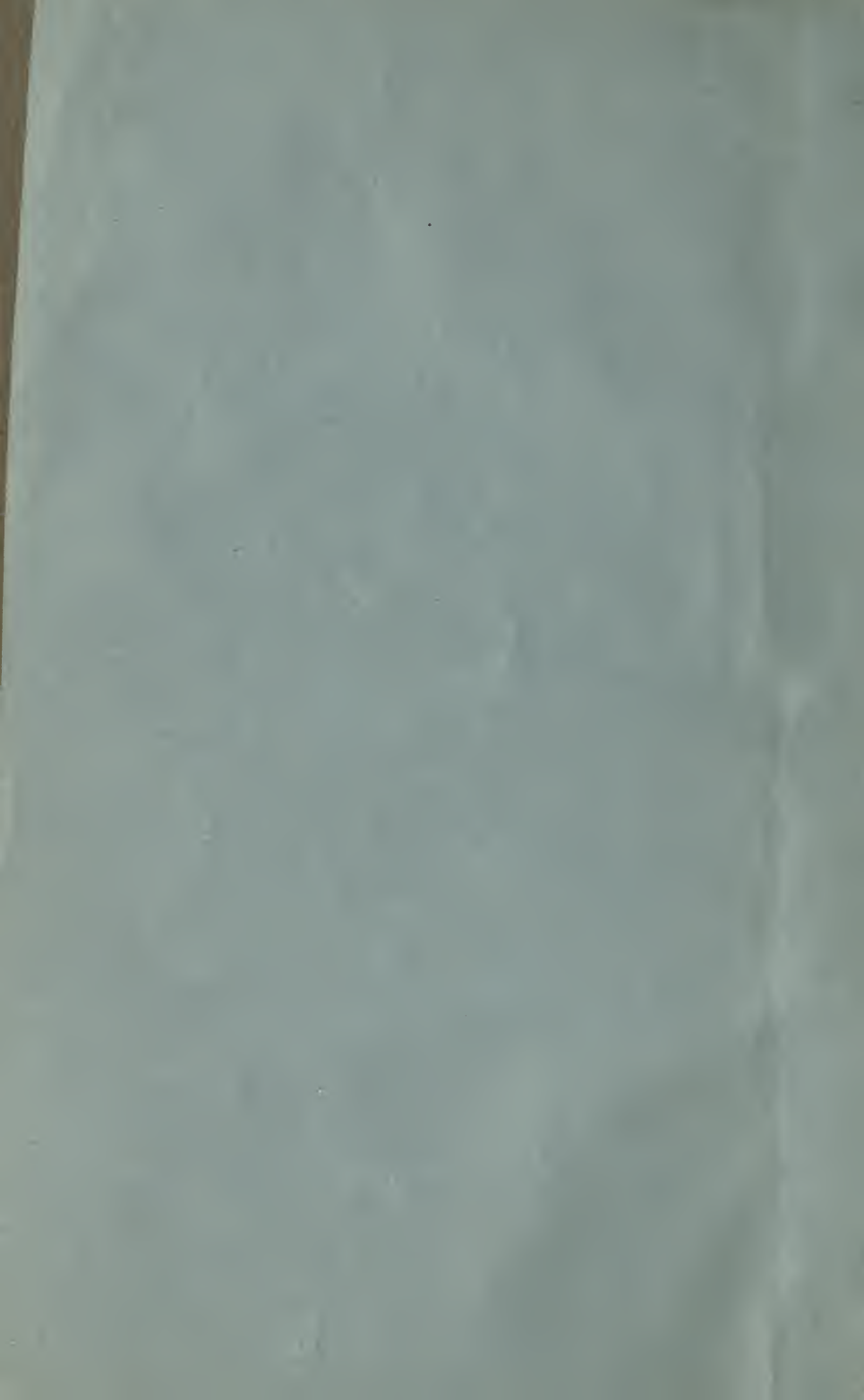
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Necessity for Miracles.

By Orson Pratt.

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CHAPTER VI.

NECESSITY FOR MIRACLES.

by Orson Pratt

MIRACLES INDISPENSABLE TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH ON THE EARTH—SIGNS PROMISED AS A PART OF THE GOSPEL—OBJECT OF SIGNS—NECESSITY FOR THEIR CONTINUANCE—THE BODY OR CHURCH CONSTITUTED OF MIRACULOUS MEMBERS.

1.—MIRACLES ARE INDISPENSABLE TO THE EXISTENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. This is the great proposition to be demonstrated in this chapter; and the sacred scriptures will be the evidence on which the demonstration will be founded. The importance of this proposition none can deny: it involves the question of the very existence of the Christian Church on the earth, during many centuries past; for if the proposition be established, the whole of Christendom who limit the miraculous gifts to the first age of the Christian era, is without a Christian Church. No subject could be proposed of more overwhelming importance! The investigation, therefore, should be conducted by the reader in the most candid, calm, and dispassionate manner: he should carefully weigh in the balances of divine truth, every evidence and argument adduced, so as to give such a decision as will tend to the salvation of his soul. To this end, he should free himself, as much as possible, from every prejudicial or traditional influence: and approach the all-important subject with a humble, prayerful, contrite heart, seeking for the light of the Spirit which guides into all truth.

2.—The classes of miracles which distinguish the Church of Christ from the churches of men, are those designated and promised in the Gospel. We have already named, in chapter fifth, some of the most prominent miraculous gifts promised to the Church; and have proved that they are essential to the existence of Christianity. But as the promises of the Gospel are great, and its miraculous gifts numerous, it is of the greatest moment that the subject should be thoroughly investigated, and clearly understood; otherwise, there is great danger of embracing the popular delusions of apostate Christendom, under the fatal supposition that we are embracing Christianity.

3.—Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared unto the eleven Apostles, and said unto them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."—(Mark xvi. 15—18.) The preaching of the Gospel to every creature was to divide the whole world into two great classes—believers and unbelievers: the former were to be blessed with *salvation* and *signs*; the latter

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were to receive *damnation*. Not only the Apostles, but all believers throughout the world were blessed with these promised signs. This is evident from the twentieth verse, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." If any believers had failed to receive the promise, the word would not have been confirmed to them. It was not confirmed in a few instances only, but they "*preached every where,*" and in all places the believers received the promised blessings.

4.—The believers were not left in suspense or doubt in regard to the truth of the doctrine which they embraced; but each received a confirmation of his faith by enjoying for himself the signs. To see the Apostles in the possession of these gifts was not sufficient: each needed a confirmation greater than merely seeing others perform miracles: to see certain powers manifested through others, would not wholly remove the doubts in one's own mind, so as to know whether such powers were genuine or spurious, or whether they were from God or from some other source. And even though one were fully convinced that the miraculous powers, enjoyed by others, were of God, yet he would need a confirmation that his own faith was genuine. A wicked man or an unbeliever may see others enjoy the promised blessings, but this does not make himself a better man. Therefore, each needs these promised signs, in order that he may know that his own faith is acceptable to God. Indeed, without he enjoyed the signs, he would most positively know that he, himself, was an unbeliever, and numbered with that class which Jesus said should "*be damned.*"

5.—Therefore, the great and almost exclusive object of the signs and miracles of the Gospel is to confirm, not unbelievers, but believers, and to edify and perfect them for their future state, giving them the most infallible knowledge that their faith is true and genuine.

6.—The corrupt apostates and false teachers of the last seventeen centuries, have taught their followers that the miraculous signs were only intended for Christians of the first century, in order to establish the divinity of the Christian religion; and that when they had accomplished the object for which they were given, they ceased and were no longer necessary. Such assertions are absolutely false, and in direct opposition to the scriptures, and without the least shadow of proof. It is a wicked malicious lie, invented by Christendom, to cover up and hide their own dark, corrupt, soul-destroying apostasy from the people.

7.—These apostate teachers found themselves destitute of all the great, grand, and most glorious gifts of the Holy Ghost; they found themselves stripped of all the powers, signs, and miracles of the Gospel: and in this naked, disgusting, powerless, apostate condition, they saw that there was no possibility of saving their rotten, abominable, anti-christian churches from crumbling to utter ruin, unless they could invent some excuse for the absence of the Gospel gifts: it was for this hell-deserving purpose, and for this alone, that they invented this heaven-daring lie, blasphemously asserting that all the great characteristics of christianity—all the heavenly powers of the ancient Gospel—all the signs promised to believers—all the manifold miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, were entirely unnecessary. Strange to relate! This blasphemous lie was believed by millions, without the least particle of evidence. Shameful and disgracing as it was, it was their only subterfuge—the only cloak for their awful apostasy.

8.—But in those early ages of the apostacy, the Bible was not read by the common people; therefore, they were unprepared to detect the cunning lies invented by their priests. And before copies of the Bible were multiplied by the discovery of the art of printing, the dreadful delusion had spread and become so popular, that whole nations were drawn into the fatal deception.

9.—When at length the scriptures were printed, and the people could read for themselves, some clearly beheld the apostate condition of all Christendom; but how to remedy the matter they knew not. To turn again to Christianity, and believe in the necessity of ancient Bible religion, would subject them to the derision, contempt, and persecution of the popular apostate churches. To withdraw themselves from the “Whore of Babylon”—the Catholics, or from her “harlot daughters”—the Protestants, would be very unpopular. Therefore, under these conditions, millions have continued to cling to these monstrous impositions, even to the present day. To say that the people do not know any better, would be an insult to their judgment; for can they not read? Can they not see on almost every page of the New Testament a description of the signs and gifts which characterized the Christian Church so long as it was on the earth? Who, then, that can read the Bible, can be so entirely devoid of all common sense, as not to perceive that the whole of Christendom is as destitute of Bible Christianity, as the idolatrous Pagans? We will not insult Bible readers by telling them that they have not discovered the apostacy: they have perceived it: they are not ignorant of the dreadful fact; and herein is their condemnation, because they love popular darkness more than they love Bible light.

10.—If there be any honest-hearted person, however, who has never read the promises of Jesus, and who desires to know what ground there is for believing that miraculous signs are necessary in all ages, we most cheerfully present to him our evidence and reasons.

11.—First, miraculous signs should be claimed in all ages by the believers in the Gospel, because Jesus promised them, and has never intimated any repeal of that promise. All Gospel promises should be claimed by Gospel believers, until divine revelation repeals them. For instance, in the same verses, where Jesus promises these *signs*, he also promises *salvation*. As both of these Gospel blessings are promised, both should be claimed. None have the right to hope for the promised Salvation who have not the promised Signs. Indeed, those who have not the Signs, are not believers; and, therefore, instead of having a right to Salvation, Jesus says expressly, that all such “*shall be damned.*”

12.—Second, Miraculous Signs and gifts should be claimed in all ages, by believers, because they are, not something exclusive and separate from the Gospel, but the most prominent and essential parts of it. The Gospel consists of certain Commands to be obeyed, and of certain Blessings to be received: of these latter, the miraculous gifts form, by far, the major part. The Commands alone do not constitute the Gospel; neither do the Blessings alone constitute it. But the Gospel is composed of both: both are in full force, until the whole or some parts thereof, are repealed by divine revelation. To do away the least Blessing or Command of the Gospel, is to do away the Gospel itself. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost are as much a part of the Gospel, as Faith, Repentance, Baptism, or Remission of Sins.

13.—To say that Miracles were merely given, in the first century, to esta-

blish the divinity of the Gospel, would be virtually saying that one part of the Gospel was given to establish another; or that the *Gospel Power* was given to merely establish the *Gospel Form*; and that when the Form was established, the *Power* ceased. But if only that part, called the Form remains, then the world are cursed with a perverted Gospel, or with another Gospel strikingly different from the one enjoyed in the first century.

14.—After the divinity of the Christian religion was established, during the first century, is it not exceedingly strange that the Gospel should be considered unnecessary in all succeeding ages? Strange though it be, yet such have virtually been the assertions of apostate religionists: they have unblushingly declared that the miraculous Gospel preached and enjoyed by all the ancient Saints, has been entirely unnecessary during the last seventeen centuries.

15.—The Apostle Paul calls the Gospel, “The POWER OF GOD unto salvation.” and clearly enumerates its various miraculous powers, and shows that they are indispensable to “the perfecting of the Saints.” But Christendom now tell us that the Gospel of Power which the great Apostle preached, was necessary in its first introduction, but having accomplished its object, it ceased; and that now they have a Gospel without such blessings, and pretend that it has the same power to save as the one that Paul preached. But hear, O ye apostate teachers, the terrible denunciation of Paul that rests upon your guilty heads. “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Galatians i. 8, 9.) The Gospel that Paul preached, and which the Galatians received, was a Miraculous one, consisting of certain commands which they obeyed, and of certain signs received. All who preach a different one, though they be angels from heaven, will be accursed.

16.—Third, The miraculous Signs should be claimed in all ages, because they would be equally as beneficial to the believers in one generation as in another. Modern Christendom assert that they were given, not so much for the benefit of believers, as for the convincing of unbelievers, and for the establishing of the divinity of the Christian message, that the world might distinguish the true Church from every other Church. It is very evident, however, that this was not the principal object of the Signs. “These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name,” says Jesus, “*they shall cast out devils.*” Although this power might, in certain cases, convince the unbelieving world, yet it is by no means to be supposed that this was the principal design. Devils and unclean spirits frequently took possession of the human tabernacle, tormenting individuals in various ways. Jesus promised believers that they, in his name, should cast them out. Now one object which Jesus had in view in granting this power, was to benefit the one possessed. Another object was to confirm the believer, that they, by having power over the devil in this life, might be more fully assured that they should obtain a complete victory and final triumph over him in the world to come. That person who cannot obtain power in the name of Jesus to cast out devils in this life, has great reason to fear lest the devil shall have power over him in the next. What assurance has any one that he shall obtain a complete salvation from the power of the devil, when his spirit shall leave the body, if he cannot claim the promise of Jesus, and cast him out while in this world? One of the pur-

poses, then, which Jesus had in view in bestowing this blessing, was that believers might learn to prevail against the devil before they should enter the invisible world of spirits. And another purpose, as we have already named, was to deliver the unhappy demoniac from his miserable and wretched condition, and set him free from the grasp of this awful monster.

17.—Now both of these purposes are just as essential for the good of mankind in this age as in the first age of Christianity. It would be equally as essential for a man who is possessed of devils, in this age, to be liberated, as it was in any former one. And it would also be equally as essential that a believer should learn to command the devil in the name of Jesus, that he might obtain a complete victory over him in all things, as it was for ancient believers. Therefore, as there is no Scripture to do away this promise, nor any reason to prove it unnecessary, it must be intended for believers of all ages, until the devil is bound.

18.—“*They shall speak in new tongues.*” The benefit of this miraculous sign is obvious to every one. If a servant of God were under the necessity of acquiring, in the ordinary way, a knowledge of languages, a large portion of his time would be unprofitably occupied. While he was spending years to learn the language of a people sufficiently accurate to preach the glad tidings of salvation unto them, thousands would be perishing for the want of the knowledge. If he could be endowed immediately by the power of the Holy Ghost to speak in any language necessary, how much laborious study would be avoided; how much time would be saved that could be occupied more usefully in the spread of the Gospel; how much more accurately would principles be expressed, when, not only the ideas, but the language itself is given by the Holy Ghost. How vastly superior is God’s plan of qualifying His servants to preach in different languages and tongues, to the plans adopted by modern divines! The servant of God is qualified in a moment, as it were, to preach by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the language of any people to whom he may be sent; while modern divines will throw away years in acquiring the knowledge of a language; and when they have acquired it, they cannot preach in it by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but are still dependent upon their own learning and wisdom.

19.—In one day the unlearned fishermen of Galilee acquired a more extensive qualification for preaching in the different languages of the earth, than all the various grades and ranks of clergymen who have disgraced the name of Christianity on the eastern hemisphere for the last seventeen centuries. The gift of tongues was not confined to the ministers of Christ alone, but it was bestowed liberally upon the private members of the Church. Indeed, it was one of the signs promised to believers throughout all the world.

20.—That the principal use of this gift was to preach the Gospel to people of different tongues and languages, we presume no one will deny. And that there was another benefit, derived through the medium of this gift, is also evident. The members of the Church were confirmed and strengthened in their faith by the enjoyment of this gift. Jesus had promised this miraculous sign, among many others, to believers; if they had failed to receive the blessings, they would have had reason to doubt whether they were true believers; but when they received new tongues, together with all other promised blessings, they were no longer in doubt, but were assured, not only of the truth of the doctrine, but that they themselves were accepted of God.

21.—The benefits to be derived from this gift are as essential in this age,

as in the first age of Christianity. It is as necessary that people of different languages should hear the Gospel now, as in early ages. It is also as important that believers should be confirmed by this gift now, as it ever was. Therefore, as there is no scripture to limit this gift to the early Christians, and no reason why believers should not enjoy it now, we are compelled to admit that this promise of Jesus is in full force yet, and that whenever and wherever we find a Church of true believers in Christ, there we shall also find the signs of believers. And as the gift of tongues is not among the apostate churches now on the earth, we are compelled by the word of God to consider them all unbelievers. Indeed, they cannot be believers; for if they were, they could speak with new tongues, as Jesus promised.

22.—“*They shall take up serpents, or if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.*” This promise of our Great Redeemer was also made to every creature in all the world who should believe the Gospel. The use of this miraculous gift was to preserve life, in case any believer should accidentally be bitten by a poisonous serpent as Paul was; (see Acts xxviii.) or should unintentionally swallow a deadly poison, as the sons of the Prophet did; (see 2 Kings iv.). Jesus promised that it should not hurt them. When the Israelites were bitten by poisonous serpents, they were healed by simply looking at a brazen serpent which the Lord commanded Moses to raise up in the wilderness; so the believers in Christ can prevail against deadly poisons by simply looking to him in faith; for Jesus cannot fail to fulfil his promise to the believer.

23.—“*They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*” This also is one of the signs of believers. Sickness is a very prevalent calamity among the inhabitants of our fallen world. Any medical discoveries that will benefit the sick, are considered of inestimable value. Medicines are valued in proportion to their usefulness. Some medicines are useful in one disease, but of no benefit in any other; some will conquer a disease, but, at the same time, will leave a lasting injury upon the human constitution. Others have a more salutary effect, and are beneficial in numerous diseases; such, when their useful tendencies are thoroughly understood, are generally prized in preference to those of an inferior quality.

24.—One of the most simple and harmless prescriptions for the sick, and one which is a certain cure for diseases and plagues of every description—is that prescribed by one of the most celebrated physicians that ever lived among men. The prescription is simply this—“**THEY SHALL LAY HANDS UPON THE SICK, AND THEY SHALL RECOVER.**” There is no disease so violent in its nature—so deadly in its operations, but what this remedy, when properly attended to, will effect a complete cure, without in the least injuring the human system, like many other prescriptions. This remedy is infinitely superior to all others; first, because of its universal application to all diseases, plagues, and pestilences; secondly, because of the certainty with which it removes pain and every cause of disease; thirdly, because of the expeditious and immediate relief which it affords the patient; fourthly, because it does not prostrate the human system, and injure the constitution like many other powerful prescriptions, which frequently terminate in the worst of consequences; fifthly, because it can be obtained without money, or price, being within the reach of the poor as well as the rich; sixthly, because it does not require years of laborious study to acquire a knowledge of the nature of the disease or of the nature of its treatment, like most other theo-

ries; and, seventhly, because it can be obtained in all parts of the world where true believers are to be found.

25.—Another prescription of equal value, and producing like effects, is given by another celebrated author in these words:—"Is any sick among you? let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." James v. 14, 15. The prayer of faith accompanied by the ordinances is the most universal, powerful, and effective remedy of any that has ever been discovered.

26.—The great Physician, who has unfolded to the nations this infinitely valuable and all powerful remedy, has been jealous of his own glory, and has so prepared it, that it can never be administered with the least effect only in his name, by one that is authorized, that is, by a true believer. This is an effectual preventative against all quacks and impostors who may undertake, in his name, to counterfeit the genuine; for in all cases, such will fail like the seven sons of Sceva. Acts xix. 13, 14, 15, 16.

27.—The apostate churches for many centuries past have been destitute of this promised blessing of our Saviour. They have endeavoured to blind the eyes of mankind, by telling them that this blessing was not needed after the first age of Christianity. This false tradition, invented by a set of wicked impostors to hide their own unbelief and want of authority, has been handed down by successive false teachers, until the present day; and what is still more strange, there are millions of poor ignorant fanatics, who have been led away with the fatal delusion. It has been the study of the wicked impostors of modern times to persuade the people that the promised signs of the Gospel are not needed now. In this thing there is great policy; for as they have so far apostatized as to be entirely destitute of the blessing themselves, if they could not succeed in deluding their followers to suppose that miraculous signs are not needed in these days, all people would at once discover, that they were not believers, but impostors, acting without authority, having a form of godliness, but destitute of its promised powers, pretending to be believers without the signs of believers.

28.—If their deluded followers should, by any means, get the scales of priestcraft from off their eyes sufficiently to believe the promise of Jesus in preference to the traditionary impositions of their false, rotten-hearted, and corrupt ministers, away would go the popularity of long-established institutions, and down would tumble, with a tremendous crash, the long-loved salaries of a hireling priesthood, and they would stand forth as monuments of shame and disgrace before all men. To save themselves from this open disgrace, they have used all their cunning and ingenuity to deceive the people into the belief that the gift of healing, and the other promised signs of Jesus, are unnecessary now.

29.—But are there any sick in these days? if so, would it not be just as beneficial for the sick to be relieved in these days as at any former time? Would it not confirm and establish believers to lay hands on the sick, and see them healed in these days, as much as it did ancient believers? If, then, it would confirm believers and benefit the sick, the same now as anciently, we have no reason to limit it to the early Christians. Hence, both scripture and reason show that the promised signs are as unlimited as the promised salvation.

30.—The affliction of devils—the confusion of tongues—deadly poisons—

and sickness, are all curses which have been introduced into the world by the wickedness of man. The blessings of the Gospel are bestowed to counteract these curses. Therefore, as long as these curses exist, the promised signs are needed to counteract their evil consequences. If Jesus had not intended that the blessings should be as extensive and unlimited in point of time as the curses, he would have intimated something to that effect in his word. But when he makes a universal promise of certain powers, to enable every believer in the Gospel throughout the world to overcome certain curses, entailed upon man, because of wickedness, it would be the rankest kind of infidelity not to believe the promised blessings necessary, as long as the curses abound among men.

31.—If these signs are necessary, why have they not existed among the churches for the last seventeen centuries? Because no true believers have existed among them during that time; for Jesus says, they shall follow the true believer; hence, if there had been any true believers, the signs would have been among them. But the very fact that the signs have ceased during that time, prove that true believers have ceased also. This is a sad picture of mankind, but it is none the less true. We say, let the promise of our blessed Redeemer be true, though it prove every man a liar or a hypocrite. The fault cannot be in Jesus, therefore it must be in man. The promises of Christ are as unchangeable as his own nature, and can never fail; but man is as changeable as the wind, and is very apt to fail in almost every respect.

32.—Since the great apostacy, sincerity has characterized millions of professed Christians, but none of them have obeyed the ancient Gospel, because no one was authorized to legally administer its ordinances to them; therefore, notwithstanding their sincerity, they could not obey the Gospel for the want of a legal administrator; hence, they could have no legal claim on the Gospel blessings. And, for this reason, they could not become legal or adopted believers; therefore, they could have no legal claim on the signs promised to believers: and this is one reason why the sincere, honest-hearted, professed Christians of modern times have not enjoyed these great blessings promised by our Saviour. Neither can they enjoy the promised salvation in all its fulness, but must be rewarded according to their works, and the opportunities they have enjoyed, in some of the mansions or kingdoms inferior in glory to the kingdom possessed by the ancient Saints, who obeyed the law and enjoyed the promised blessings. And all who will not now repent, as the authority is once more restored to the earth, and come forth out of the corrupt apostate churches, and be legally adopted into the Church of Christ, and earnestly seek after the blessings and miraculous gifts of the Gospel, shall be thrust down to hell, saith the Lord God of Hosts; for now they have no excuse for their unbelief; therefore, if they will not now repent, they shall be damned. This is the word of the Lord to priests and people of all churches and of all nations.

33.—We will now give a few examples to show the principle upon which the sick were generally healed. This was accomplished through faith in Jesus Christ. If the sick were capable of exercising faith, then faith was required of them in order to obtain the blessing. The woman who had the issue of blood for twelve years, said, "If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole." Jesus turned to her and said, "Daughter, thy *faith* hath made thee whole." (Mark v.) When Jesus went over into the land of Gennesaret, and passed through their villages, cities, and countries, so great was

their faith in him, that they brought their sick and laid them "in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole." (Mark vi.) Blind Bartimeus cried unto the Lord for mercy. "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy *faith* hath made thee whole." (Mark x.) When Jesus touched the eyes of two blind men that came into the house where he was, he said unto them, "According to your *faith* be it unto you." (Matthew ix. 29.) A certain cripple "heard Paul speak; who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had *faith* to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked." (Acts xiv. 9, 10.)

34.—Many other examples might be given to show that the power of healing was manifested through *faith*. Sometimes the faith of others was exercised in behalf of the sick; we quote the following as examples: A woman of Canaan sought a blessing for her daughter, who was grievously vexed with a devil. "Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy *faith*: be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." (Matthew xv.) A centurion exercised faith in behalf of his servant, who was sick of the palsy. "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; and as thou hast *believed*, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour." (Matthew viii.) A certain man whose son had been tormented of the devil from a child, said to Jesus, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mark ix.) The devil was rebuked, and his son was liberated. Jairus, whose daughter lay at the point of death, came to Jesus, and fell down before him, and requested him to go and lay his hands upon her, that she might be healed. While on the way to his house, one met them, saying, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe." (Mark v.) And Jesus restored his daughter to life. Many other instances are recorded where friends exercised faith in behalf of the afflicted.

35.—Therefore, it may be considered as a general law, that the sick and afflicted were healed, either through their own faith, or the faith of some of their friends. There may be some rare instances, where the blessing was bestowed through the faith of the administrator alone.

36.—It is the general opinion of modern churches that the principal object of miracles was to remove unbelief. But when Jesus went into his own country, among his old acquaintances, he marvelled because of their unbelief. (See Mark vi. 6.) "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matthew xiii.) But according to the ideas of false teachers of modern times, he should have performed greater works there, than anywhere else. As they consider signs to be for the convincing of the unbeliever; therefore the greater the unbelief, the greater should be the signs. When he found his own countrymen so very unbelieving, he should, according to modern notions concerning the object of signs, have performed far more splendid and magnificent miracles there, than he did in any other region where their unbelief was not so great. But the facts of the case were directly the reverse. The greater the wickedness and unbelief of a people, the less were the mighty works performed among them. So among the christian churches, as their unbelief increased, the mighty works decreased.

And when the people became hardened in apostacy and unbelief, all the mighty works ceased, and the salvation ceased also.

37.—Thus it will be seen, that the signs and blessings of the Gospel are enjoyed only by faith. The greater the faith, the greater will be the manifestations of the miraculous power of God. The miracles will decrease as faith decreases; and cease when faith ceases. The miraculous signs bestowed upon believers in this life, are blessings far inferior to those of a glorious resurrection and eternal life. But how can he that has not faith sufficient to obtain the miraculous signs, or smaller blessings, obtain faith sufficient to receive the greater ones? If the smaller blessings are withheld for the want of faith, will not the greater ones be withheld for a like reason? If a person has not means enough to buy himself a coat, how can he expect to buy a splendid habitation? So likewise, if a person has not faith enough to obtain the miraculous signs promised, how can he expect to obtain a glorious mansion in the kingdom of God? If his faith is so weak that it will not procure for him the smaller blessings, he may be much more assured that the same weak faith will not procure for him the greater ones.

38.—Jesus said, as we have already quoted, that "*All things are possible to him that believeth.*" Jesus also said, "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you: What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark xi. 22, 23, 24.) This promise was not confined to the Apostles and early Saints; for the term "*whosoever,*" embraces all mankind who shall have faith in every age throughout the world. Who can read these precious promises of our Saviour without perceiving in the plainest light, the awful apostate condition of the churches? They are without faith—without any confidence in God. They despise those who are sincerely seeking after the ancient faith. Both from the pulpit and from the press they boldly avow their infidelity in the above promises, and say all manner of evil against those who do believe them. They will greatly praise the faith of ancient Saints, and build synagogues and chapels to their memory; but for any person to teach that the same faith is necessary now, is in their estimation, the highest blasphemy. O ye hypocrites! Why do you profess to be the followers of Christ, and yet deny his promises? O ye blind guides! Why do you deceive the people with a form of godliness, and yet deny the promised powers? Why do you make void the promises of Jesus through your unbelief and wicked traditions? Why do you through great swelling words of man's wisdom, pervert the truth, and deny the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the gift of revelation and prophecy? Why do you preach for hire, and through covetousness make merchandise of the people, while the poor and the needy are crying for bread? O ye wicked and corrupt teachers! Ye hirelings! Why do you, through your mock piety and cunning craftiness, not only close the gates of heaven upon yourselves, but hedge up the way of others who would know the truth and be saved? How can you escape the vengeance of eternal fire? How long will the Lord suffer you to practice your deceptions and wickedness? The hour of your judgment is nigh! Howl, ye apostate churches, for the misery which shall come upon you! The day of fierce vengeance is at hand, and you shall utterly perish from the earth!

39.—The Church is called the body of Christ. “Now, ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (1 Cor. xii. 27.) We shall here give the names of the different members composing the various parts of the body or Church of Christ. “God hath set some in the Church, first, *Apostles*; secondarily, *Prophets*; thirdly, *Teachers*; after that *Miracles*; then, Gifts of *Healing, Helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues.*” (Verse 28.) These members of the body were joined together upon one common principle. They were all introduced into the Church through faith, repentance, and the ordinances. Paul says, “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.” (Verse 13.)

40.—This one body into which all the members are baptized, is quickened and animated in all parts by one Spirit. The operations of the Spirit in different parts of the body are various. “To one,” says Paul, “is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another discerning of Spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (Verses 8, 9, 10, 11.) Paul has here so clearly described the Church of Christ, that none need be at a loss when he has found it. Every faithful member of the body of Christ possesses some gift of the Spirit. Every church now on the earth can compare themselves with this scriptural pattern; if they do not resemble the pattern, they may know at once that they are not the body or Church of Christ. If they have no Apostles nor Prophets—no officers that can receive the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge by the inspiration of the Spirit—if they have no member possessing the gift of healing—no worker of miracles—no beholder of visions or discerners of spirits—no speaker with tongues—no interpreter of tongues—if they have none of these members of the body of Christ, then they have nothing that resembles the pattern, and, therefore, they cannot possibly be the Church of Christ.

41.—The body of Christ is wholly made up or constituted of the above named members. To do away the least member there mentioned would produce a schism in the body, and it would be imperfect like the human body, with one of its members lacking. The body, or Church, like the human body, would become more and more imperfect and mutilated in proportion to the usefulness and number of the above members that are done away. And when all the members or parts of the body vanish, it ceases to exist on the earth. It is an admitted fact that the greater part, if not all, of the members, described by Paul, are done away, and considered unnecessary at the present day. Now the body or Church is *nothing*, separate and apart from its members; therefore, where they cease, the body must cease also.

42.—There are many parts of the human body that are essential to its existence, and without which, it must inevitably perish; such, for example, as the mouth—the heart—the lungs—the stomach—the liver—the bowels, and many others too numerous to mention. Deprive the body of either of these essential parts, and all other parts will perish also. Two of the most prominent parts or members of the body of Christ are, “First, *Apostles*; secondly, *Prophets.*” These may be considered the eyes and mouth-piece of the body. Take these away, and the body is left in total darkness without

eyes to see, and without a mouth through which to receive the nourishment essential to its existence. If, therefore, only these two members were to cease, all the other members would speedily perish, and the Church of Christ would cease to exist among men. The apostate churches have had neither of these members for upwards of seventeen centuries, therefore, during that time, they have had no eyes nor mouth through which they could receive light and nourishment.

43.—If the mouth and eyes of the human body were to be destroyed, the human spirit would take its flight, and the body would soon become a mass of loathsome corruption, sending forth a most offensive stench, engendering pestilence and disease, and affecting the health of all who should come within its nauseous influence. Such would be the fatal consequences attending the Church, should they so far depart from God as to lose inspired Apostles and Prophets—the first two essential and most important members which God placed in the body. If these members were taken away, the Holy Spirit, which is the life of the Church, would take its flight, even as the human spirit flees from the mortal body, when its essential parts are destroyed. When the Holy Spirit takes its departure, the body or Church, is left in a lifeless state; all the miraculous operations cease.

44.—In ancient times, after Apostles and Prophets ceased, the other members of the body began immediately to die for want of nourishment; the member possessing the gift of healing—the worker of miracles—the speaker with tongues—the interpreter of tongues, and all other members, withered away and died, leaving a mass of fetid corruption whose nauseous stench and abominable filthiness have spread forth a deadly malaria among all nations.

45.—It is in vain for the apostate churches to endeavour to prove themselves to be the body of Christ, by pretending that they have one or two of the members still in existence; for Paul inquires, "*If they were all one member, where were the body?*" (Verse 19.) If every part of our bodies were destroyed, except hands and feet, they could in no wise constitute a living body; so, likewise if every member of the Church were done away, except professed teachers, and some two or three other pretended members of different functions, these could no more constitute a living Church, than hands, and arms, and feet, and legs, could constitute a living man. The Holy Spirit would no more dwell in these pretended fragments of the Church, which are falsely said to still remain, than the human spirit would dwell in the hands, feet, or legs, after the rest of the body was gone.

46.—Reader, would it not be marvellously strange to behold hands, feet, and legs moving, acting, and performing their accustomed functions after all the rest of the body was destroyed? Yet this would not be any more strange, than it is to see teachers and some few other pretended members, endeavouring to move, and act, and perform certain other functions, after nine-tenths of the most important and vital members of the Church have been done away for centuries. As well might you undertake to retain life in an isolated human hand, as to retain life in teachers for centuries after Apostles, Prophets, workers of miracles, &c., have ceased.

47.—Paul says, "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (Verse 21.) But in direct opposition to this instruction, the apostate teachers of modern times say to the worker of miracles, I have no need of thee. And their

pastors say to the speaker with tongues, and the interpreter of tongues, we have no need of you in the body. It matters not how feeble, or how much inferior in use some members are, when compared with others, yet none can be dispensed with. "Nay," says Paul, "much more, those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary." (Verse 22.) If the speaker with tongues, or the interpreter of tongues, is considered a more feeble member, and not as useful as the Prophets and Apostles; yet Paul says expressly, that such "*are necessary.*" Therefore, for a teacher or pastor to say that they are *not* necessary, is to come out in direct opposition to the scriptures.

48.—How superlatively ridiculous it would be for the hands and feet to rise up in rebellion against the eyes—the mouth—the heart—the lungs—the bowels—the breast—the neck, and say; we have no need of you: we can get along without your assistance; you are useless appendages to us, hands and feet: we can feel and walk without your help. And yet as a parallel to this, the teachers and pastors of our day, have arisen up in rebellion to Paul's words, and have said to Apostles—Prophets—the healer of the sick—the worker of miracles—the beholder or discerner of spirits—the speaker with tongues—the interpreter of tongues—we have no need of you: we can get along without your assistance, you are all unnecessary parts of the body: you are perfectly useless to us pastors and teachers: we can perform all the functions of our office without your aid. Such has been the state of the apostate churches for the last seventeen hundred years. And such is the awful darkness that now reigns in their midst.

49.—It is in and through the body or Church of Christ that the Spirit manifests itself: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (Verse 7.) It is, therefore, by these manifestations that every man in the Church is profited. There is as much necessity for these various manifestations now as there was anciently. Paul mentions in this chapter nine different gifts or manifestations of the Spirit. The churches which have not these miraculous manifestations have not the Holy Spirit; and without the Spirit they are none of Christ's.

50.—The distinguishing characteristics between true and false churches are so evident that none need be mistaken. The one enjoys the Holy Spirit with all its gifts, as set forth in the word of God; the others profess to enjoy the Spirit, but have none of the gifts and operations ascribed to it. The only way by which we discover that the human body is animated by the human spirit, is by its operations; so likewise, the method by which we determine that a church enjoys the Holy Spirit is by its diversity of operations or manifestations. If these cease, we have every reason to believe that the Holy Spirit has departed also.

51.—Among all nations, and in all ages of the world, whenever the Holy Spirit has been given, it has exhibited itself in supernatural gifts. These gifts were given, not only for the benefit of the Church in this life, but to prepare them for still greater blessings in the world to come. It is altogether a mistaken idea to suppose that these gifts were merely given for the convincing of unbelievers. Paul says expressly, that the gifts which were given by our Lord after his ascension were intended for other purposes. "When he (Christ) ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (Eph. iv. 8.) "And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers." (Verse 11.) These, toge-

ther with numerous other gifts, were given, not merely to establish the truth of Christianity, but as Paul says, "For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Verses 12, 13, 14.)

52.—By these declarations we discover the objects the Lord has in view, in giving gifts unto men. One object is declared to be "*for the perfecting of the Saints.*" It is very evident from the whole tenor of scripture, that unless the Saints are perfected they can never enjoy a perfect salvation. The only plan which Jesus has devised for the accomplishment of this great object, is through the medium of the spiritual gifts. When the supernatural gifts of the Spirit cease, the Saints cease to be perfected, therefore they can have no hopes of obtaining a perfect salvation. To do away from the Church, Apostles, Prophets, and other gifts, is to do away the great plan which heaven has devised for the perfection and final salvation of the righteous.

53.—The author of the epistle to the Hebrews urges upon the Saints the necessity of "*going on unto perfection;*" (see chap. vi. 1;) but this would be impossible for those churches which have no Apostles, Prophets, and other gifts which Jesus gave after his ascension. Such churches could not "*go on unto perfection,*" for they have lost and continued to do away the very gifts which were intended to accomplish that object.

54.—Has Jesus anywhere in his word told us that his plan of perfecting the Saints should cease, and that mankind would introduce a better one? If not, why then should we not prefer our Saviour's plan in preference to all others? Why do away the powers and gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were intended, not merely for the convincing of unbelievers, but for the perfecting of believers? In every nation and age, where believers exist, there the gifts must exist to perfect them, otherwise they would be altogether unprepared for the reception of the still greater powers and glories of the eternal world. If there were no unbelievers on the earth, still there would be the same necessity for the miraculous gifts that there was among early Christians; for if the whole world were believers in Christ they could not possibly be perfected without these gifts, and hence they could not enter into the fulness of his glory.

55.—It is, therefore, directly in opposition to the word of God for the apostate churches to declare that "the object of miraculous gifts was merely to establish the Christian religion, and that after that object was accomplished they were no longer necessary, and therefore ceased." The word of God declares that they are "*for the perfecting of the Saints;*" and, therefore, wherever there are *Saints*, there the gifts are needed, not merely to establish the truth by supernatural evidence, but to *perfect* those who already believe.

56.—Another great object which the Lord has in view, in sending gifts unto men, is "*the work of the ministry.*" Without these gifts the "work of the ministry" never could be carried on; without inspired Apostles and Prophets the gifts of revelation and prophecy cease, and where these cease the work of the ministry ceases. The apostate churches have no more authority for taking away the gifts of Apostles and Prophets, than they have for taking away the gifts of Pastors and Teachers. There is precisely the same evidence for doing away the whole of the gifts, as there is for doing

away a part and pretending to retain the others. "The work of the ministry" is clearly manifested in the scriptures. It is required to preach the Gospel to all nations in the different tongues and languages of the earth. The ministry is required to receive revelations for the benefit of themselves and all the Saints, reproofing by revelation those who need reproof; comforting those who need comfort; forewarning the Church of approaching judgments; pointing out by the spirit of revelation a way of escape; revealing doctrine and principle in relation to things both temporal and spiritual, and unfolding all things necessary for the perfection and eternal exaltation of the righteous. Besides this, the ministry are to lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and for the healing of the sick, and to administer all other ordinances of the Church. Therefore, without the supernatural powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit the "work of the ministry" would cease, and when that ceases men cease to be saved.

57.—Paul declares, as we have already quoted, that the gifts were given "for the edifying of the body of Christ." But the various bodies or apostate churches declare boldly, that the gifts are no longer necessary in this age of learning and refinement. "Now," say they, "we can be edified by learned divines who have become eminently qualified by a long course of study in our great theological institutions. Now," they exclaim, "we have a glorious substitute in the stead of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the first age of Christianity—in the days of ignorance and darkness, the gifts of the Spirit were given to edify the Church; but now, we have become so learned and enlightened, we need some better plan than the one devised in that day of ignorance. Then they knew no better than to be edified through the gifts of the Spirit, but now we have sought out a plan far superior; then they had nothing but knowledge and certainty, and were all of one mind, but now we are blessed with the opinions and commentaries of uninspired men, all differing and contradicting one another, dividing us in our sentiments and doctrines. Oh, how great is the wisdom of our modern divines! How immensely superior are opinion and guess-work to certainty and knowledge! Then they had nothing but direct revelation—the spirit of prophecy, visions, and the ministry of angels, to guide them into the truth; but now we have advanced to the high and exalted privilege of being taught by men who despise new revelation and the gifts of the Spirit, and favour us with their superior opinions, and creeds, and articles of religion. Great is the plan devised by human wisdom for the edifying of the Church: God's plan can be dispensed with now as unnecessary." This is the language of modern Christendom, if we are to judge from their opposition to the gifts which Paul says were given for the "*edifying of the body of Christ.*"

58.—That no one need be mistaken, and suppose the gifts in the future ages of the church to be unnecessary, Paul says expressly, that they shall continue for the purposes which he specifies, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." This puts the subject beyond all doubt and controversy; all can see that the gifts were intended as long as there was a Church of the Saints that needed perfecting and edifying. If the modern churches of Christendom have not attained to the unity of the faith and knowledge—to all the perfection and fulness of Christ, they certainly will need the gifts until they shall have arrived at that state. The period when the Saints shall attain to the perfection and fulness of Christ is very

clearly and definitely expressed by the Apostle in his first epistle to the Corinthians. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." (xiii. 8, 9, 10.) "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Verse 12.

59.—Thus it will be seen that the gifts were not to cease until "that which is perfect is come"—until we see the Lord face to face—until we know as we are known. Then tongues will cease, for the heavenly glorified throng will all speak the same language. Then prophesying in part will be done away; for the knowledge of the future will be more fully understood. Then knowledge in part shall vanish away, for the saints will know in full. Then the day of perfection will come, and all the saints shall enjoy the fulness of Christ, and see him no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face. Until that day of glory and perfection shall have arrived, all the spiritual gifts will be indispensably necessary, without which the saints can never attain to that great salvation promised.

60.—Another object for which the miraculous gifts are given unto men, is to keep them from delusion. They are given that the Saints "henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." The very reason why the apostate churches have for the last seventeen centuries been carried about by the doctrines, creeds, and traditions of uninspired men who have craftily deceived them, is because they lacked the gifts which Paul says were given as an effectual preventative against such winds of doctrine. All churches which have not the gifts, are already deceived and deluded. If it were possible, these popular and learned impostors would deceive the very elect; but this is impossible, for the elect enjoy the gifts which will detect with the most unerring certainty every imposition, however plausible and popular it may be.

61.—The Papist and Protestant churches of modern times, notwithstanding the greatness of their numbers and their exceedingly great popularity, are impositions, under the pious name of Christianity, of the most glaring and dangerous kind.

62.—Their cunning, learned, arch-impostors have multiplied their followers to millions, and flooded all Europe and America with their pernicious doctrines. Thousands of the honest and unwary are annually led away by these fatal delusions, under the false and vain suppositions that they are embracing Christianity. Instead, however, of embracing the Christian religion of the New Testament, they have only embraced some traditional forms that bear but a faint resemblance to it, while its miraculous powers, gifts, and blessings are entirely unknown among them, and, indeed, are considered as altogether unnecessary. Oh, apostate Christianity! Oh, modern Christendom! Thou, that corruptest all nations with thine abominations, and makest merchandise of the souls of men! Oh! that thou didst but know the day of thy visitation—the hour of God's judgments—and wouldst awake from the awful slumber of ages! But alas! thine eyes are closed, no more to be opened, until they are lifted up in torment, in the midst of lamentations, and woes, and miseries, and hopeless despair.

CHAPTER V.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

THE ENUMERATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS—THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THE CHURCH—THE GIFT OF REVELATION—THE GIFT OF PROPHECY—THE GIFT OF TRANSLATING LANGUAGES—THE SEER'S GIFT, OR THE GIFT OF SEEING WITH THE URIM AND THUMMIM—THE GIFT OF VISIONS AND DREAMS—NO RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE AND THAT OF MODERN CHRISTENDOM.

1.—SPIRITUAL GIFTS are those blessings given by the Holy Spirit to all who are made partakers of it. Whenever the Holy Ghost takes up its residence in a person, it not only cleanses, sanctifies, and purifies him, in proportion as he yields himself to its influence, but also imparts to him some gift, intended for the benefit of himself and others. No one who has been born of the Spirit, and who remains sufficiently faithful, is left destitute of a Spiritual Gift. A person who is without a Spiritual Gift, has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, in a sufficient degree, to save him; he cannot be called a Saint, or a child of God; for all Saints who constitute the Church of Christ, are baptized into the same Spirit; and each one, without any exception, is made a partaker of some Spiritual Gift.

2.—Spiritual Gifts, imparted to the Church, are very numerous, among which may be mentioned the following: Revelations and prophecies; translations of sacred writings from foreign and unknown languages; seeing by the Urim and Thummim, or a Seer's gift; visions, dreams, and the interpretation of dreams; the discerning of spirits and angels; power over devils and wicked spirits; power to counteract deadly poisons, quench the violence of fire, and shut the mouths of ferocious beasts; power over trees, mountains, earth, air, and water; power to heal the sick, lame, blind, deaf, and dumb; to smite the wicked with plagues, famines, and death; to speak with new tongues, or interpret the same; to work mighty miracles, raise the dead, or be translated from earth to heaven. All these, and many others too numerous to mention, are the gifts of God to the Church, through the operation and power of the Holy Ghost, shed forth upon the members thereof. Bancroft Libr

3.—Each member does not receive all these gifts; but they are distributed through the whole body, according to the will and wisdom of the Spirit. To some is given one, and to some, another: some receive small gifts; others great ones: one member may have only one gift; another may have many: one may have power to speak in the various languages of the nations; another may have a gift to interpret them: one may have a gift to heal the sick, but have no gift of faith to be healed, when he himself is sick: some may have power to heal the sick, but have no power to work miracles, such

as controlling the elements or laws of nature : some may have power to perform great miracles, but have no power to see visions, or discern spirits : some may be filled with the gift of prophecy, but have no gift to see in the Urim and Thummim : others may have the gift of a Seer, but have no gift to speak with tongues or perform miracles. Some may have all these gifts bestowed upon them, so as to understand them all, and be prepared to detect any spurious gifts, and to preside over the whole body of the church, that all may be benefited. These Spiritual Gifts are distributed among the members of the Church, according to their faithfulness, circumstances, natural abilities, duties, and callings ; that the whole may be properly instructed, confirmed, perfected, and saved.

4.—For the instruction of all who desire to learn, we shall explain some of the more important Spiritual Gifts, one by one, beginning with the

GIFT OF REVELATION.

In all ages and dispensations, when the Church of God has been on the earth, the gift of revelation has been one of the most important gifts of the Spirit. It is essential to the very existence of the Church ; for without it, the Church would become as lifeless as the human body without food, drink, or air. As the mortal body would die and become disorganized without these necessary elements, so the body of Christ—the Church—would die, become disorganized, and cease to exist on the earth, if this essential Spiritual Gift were taken from it. The gift of revelation is the spiritual food, and drink, and the very life of the Church. Without it, God never has accepted nor ever will recognize any Church, as His own, in any age or generation, or among any people, nation, or tongue.

5.—The gift of revelation is necessary in the Church to reveal doctrine. Many good principles have been revealed, in different ages, relating to the doctrine of salvation which have been recorded for the benefit of man. But these recorded principles were never intended to supersede the necessity of the revelations of the Spirit in regard to the same subjects. Because the Spirit revealed the doctrine of faith and repentance to the antediluvians, that was no reason why successive revelators, after the flood, should not have the same good principles revealed to them. Because faith and repentance were revealed in the books of Moses, that was no reason why the same should not be revealed anew in the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and in many other inspired writings of the Old Testament. Because Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were inspired to write doctrine, that did not hinder Peter, Paul, James, and Jude from being inspired also to write upon the same. Indeed, it is one of the characteristics of inspiration, that the same doctrine is often revealed, over and over again, in successive ages, by successive revelators. The reason why there is a repetition of revelations on the same subject is, not because such subject is wholly unknown, but because there are many other principles connected with it, which are of importance to be revealed, and which could not be manifested with the same good effect, if isolated from principles which were formerly revealed.

6.—Another reason why the same doctrine is revealed over again in successive generations, is, because it may not be as plain to the generations following, as when first revealed ; the latter being wholly unacquainted with the circumstances under which it was given. To remove this obscurity, God reveals the same doctrine to successive ages with such explanations, as are

necessary to make it plain to the understanding of all. Language is sometimes ambiguous and very imperfect; and especially where sacred writings have been translated from one language to another by uninspired men. The real meaning of the revelator is not always clearly understood; hence arises differences of opinions and great divisions. To remove these evils, the gift of revelation is necessary, to reveal the doctrine over again in language that can be understood; and thus to unite the views of the Saints and make them one.

7.—The gift of revelation is necessary in the Church, not only to reveal in greater plainness what has become partially obscure, by tradition and many other causes combined, but to make manifest doctrine that has been nearly or entirely lost: such as marriage for eternity; the multiplication of the human species after the resurrection; the pre-existence of the spirits of all flesh; the redemption of spirits from prison by the preaching of the Gospel to them; baptism for the dead; the redemption and immortality of the animal creation; and a great variety of other doctrines which have evidently once been understood, as the Scriptures, by references, more or less obscure, indicate. The gift of revelation will therefore reveal and make plain such doctrines as have been lost to the world for ages.

8.—In different dispensations there are generally some doctrines entirely new, such as have not been revealed to any former age. The gift of revelation therefore, is necessary to point out what doctrines are intended to be peculiar to the dispensation in which they are given. Circumcision was peculiar from Abraham till Christ; the passover and many of the laws and ordinances of Israel, were peculiar during the Mosaic dispensation; the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was peculiar to the Christian dispensation; the gathering of all things in one, in heaven and on earth, which are in Christ, is peculiar to the great and last dispensation of the fulness of times. The gathering of the twelve tribes of Israel, the building of the old and the new Jerusalems, and the preparations for the second Advent, will include many doctrines, ordinances, statutes, commands, and institutions, peculiar to the last dispensation. Therefore, the gift of revelation is necessary to bring forth things both new and old.

9.—The gift of revelation is necessary to make known the callings of God unto men. There are many appointments in the Church; such as those of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Bishops, Elders, Pastors, Teachers, and Deacons. Without revelation it could not be known whom the Spirit selected to fill these responsible stations. Therefore, without revelation there could be no legal authorities, ordained: hence, the Church would necessarily cease from the earth, when the last ones, ordained by revelation, left or departed this life. It is admitted by both Catholics and Protestants, and by nearly the whole of Christendom, that there have been no revelations since the first century of the Christian era: consequently, there could have been no callings to the ministry after that period; therefore, when the ministers who lived at the close of the first century died, the authority and the Church must have ceased from the eastern hemisphere.

10.—The gift of revelation is also necessary to make known the duties of the official members of the Church. In the Christian Church in ancient times, ministers were set apart for missions to various countries by the revelations of the Holy Ghost: they were also dictated by revelation in their daily duties; they were forbidden by revelation to visit certain places which they intended to visit and were commanded to visit certain countries where they

had no intention of going. Without revelation, they could neither be called to the ministry, nor act in the same, even if they could have been called. Therefore, take away only this one Spiritual Gift, and the Church would necessarily cease from the earth.

11.—Another very important spiritual blessing which is necessary to the existence of the church of Christ on the earth, is the

GIFT OF PROPHECY.

This gift is a blessing conferred by the Holy Ghost upon many in the Church, and is considered among the best gifts. The Apostle Paul exhorts the Church in these words :—“ Follow after charity, and desire Spiritual Gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him, howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth, edifieth the Church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying.” (1 Corinthians, xiv. 1—5.)

12.—The gift of prophecy is given to some in the Church, for the purpose of “ *edification*,” “ *exhortation*,” and “ *comfort* ” to all the members thereof. The prophecies uttered by the prophets in the Church are of more benefit to believers than to unbelievers; hence Paul, when comparing the greater usefulness of prophesying than that of tongues, says, “ Wherefore tongues are or a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. If, therefore, the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.”—(1 Corinthians xiv. 22—25.)

13.—From these quotations, we can perceive the very great blessings which believers receive through the gift of prophecy: they are edified, exhorted, and comforted. And even unbelievers, for whom Paul says, prophesying is not intended as a sign, are convinced, by having the secrets of their hearts made manifest, and are constrained to fall down upon their faces, and worship God. When the secrets of their hearts, known by no mortal but themselves, are clearly revealed through the gift of prophecy, it carries a forcible conviction to their minds, that God must indeed be in such prophets.

14.—It has been supposed, by some, that the Prophets in the Christian Church, were merely exhorters, and not revelators of future events or secret things. But, in addition to what we have already quoted upon the nature of this gift, we refer to the following :—“ Now brethren if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?” —(verse 6.) This passage clearly proves that Christian ministers, not only exhorted, but did actually speak by “ *Revelation*.” Again, in the same chapter, Paul inquires, “ How is it then, brethren? When ye come together,

many dangers; they escaped many calamities; and their lives were often very miraculously preserved. The great revelation given to John on the isle of Patmos was manifested to him by a vision.

47.—The spirit of man has eyes, as well as his body. The eyes of the spirit are in conjunction with the eyes of the body. When things are seen naturally, the eyes of the spirit behold through the instrumentality of the bodily eyes. When things are beheld spiritually, the spiritual eyes discern without the aid of the natural eyes. Hence a blind man can see spiritually, though he may be perfectly ignorant of the process of natural seeing. So likewise, millions may see naturally, and yet be perfectly ignorant of the process of spiritual seeing. As the blind man can form no idea of the beautiful landscape, or of the nature of colours or light, for want of experience; so likewise, a natural man who has never seen any thing by vision, knows not the nature of spiritual light; neither does he understand how his spirit can look upon the past or the future, or gaze upon that which is out of the reach of the natural eye. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—(1 Cor. ii. 14.)

48.—If a spiritual man declares to a natural man that he has seen what will take place, at a future time; or that he has beheld something beyond the reach of the natural eye, the latter will immediately begin to doubt the possibility of such a thing. He will say, "How can this be? It is contrary to the laws of optics and the nature of light to see the future, or to look through opaque bodies." It is all foolishness to him. Because he has never experienced a spiritual vision, he doubts the philosophy of such a mode of seeing. He does not realize that there is a more refined and powerful substance, than that of the natural light, which is copiously diffused through all nature. He does not realize that this living subtle fluid, can penetrate bodies opaque to the natural light, with the same ease that light penetrates transparent bodies, or the distant regions of space. He does not realize that this quickening powerful fluid, after having penetrated opaque bodies from a distance can proceed to the spiritual eyes and produce a sensation of vision on them, with as much force, and with greater certainty, than what is produced by the natural light upon bodily eyes.

49.—Bodies which are opaque to the natural light, or which will not admit its transmission, are not opaque to spiritual light, but are perfectly transparent to it, and will admit its rays with the most perfect freedom. Spiritual light can pass through worlds hundreds of thousands of miles in diameter with greater ease than the electric fluid passes over the telegraphic wire, or to complete its circuit, returns thousands of miles through the solid earth to the place of its generation. As the electric fluid passes through bodies opaque to the natural light, and conveys its message thousands of miles almost instantaneously, so does the still more powerful spiritual fluid convey its message from continent to continent, from heaven to earth, from world to world, in a twinkling of an eye, or with a velocity far greater than that of light. No substances are non-conductors or opaque to it. All that is necessary is to have the spiritual telegraph, or in other words, the spiritual eyes in a proper condition to receive the impression; and worlds with all their glorious contents, are exposed to the enraptured vision; and man finds himself in possession of another sense, more powerful, more extended, and more glorious, than all the other senses combined.

50.—It is difficult for the natural man to conceive of the existence of this greater sense or faculty of the mind, unless he has experienced, in a degree, these supernatural illuminations. A man who was born perfectly deaf and blind could not form the most remote idea of sounds, music, shades, colours, and the perception of distant objects: the whole world of light and sounds, would be perfectly shut out from his view. If he were told that his fellow man was blessed with two additional senses, by which he could discern objects at a distance, he might assent to the declaration, though the assertion would be altogether incomprehensible to him; he would wonder how it was possible to perceive objects beyond the reach of the hand, or how men could communicate their thoughts to one another, by speech or sound. Perhaps, he might suppose, that sound was like a jar on the body; but then, the mystery to him would be, How men could jar one another's ears, when many yards apart. Again, he might suppose light to affect the eye at a distance, something similar to what heat, at a distance, affects the body: but it would be mysterious to him, How light could affect the eye, when the luminous body was scores of miles distant. As to what was meant by a variety of colours, he could comprehend nothing, though it should be explained to him all his life. He might suppose differences of colour to be like differences of temperature, or like the differences of the velocity of currents of water or wind.

51.—If the man who was thus born deaf and blind, and who could comprehend nothing only what he learned by smelling, tasting, feeling, and reflection, were suddenly to acquire his sight and hearing, these two senses, entirely new to him, would pour into his mind a vast world of new ideas: he would find himself possessed of original faculties which had lain dormant from his birth—faculties with which he was entirely unacquainted, until new circumstances brought them into exercise. So it is with the man whose eyes are opened to see visions: he learns for the first time in his life, that there are other faculties in man, besides the five senses—faculties of a far superior nature—faculties as new to him as sight to the blind, or hearing to the deaf. He now understands what was before incomprehensible: he now can gaze upon things within the bowels of the earth, as well as upon its surface: he now finds himself beholding the past or the future with the same ease, as he formerly beheld the present: he now can look upon spirits, upon angels, and upon God, without any more effort, than to look naturally upon man or upon the natural things of Creation. Dark bodies and worlds are no longer dark to him, but they are full of light, and as transparent as the pure atmosphere of heaven. He beholds with the greatest astonishment! he gazes with rapture and delight upon the untold glories of the world of spirits, and upon the inexhaustible riches of the great Universe of God. A dormant faculty is awakened in him which he had no idea he possessed; he is a wonder to himself: a world of new ideas and knowledge rushes upon his vision: he is overwhelmed with the greatness, and magnificence of the scenery; and when the vision is withdrawn, he finds that it has been too much for mortality to endure, without being overpowered: hence, the visions of Daniel overcame his strength, prostrated his body, and made him for several days sick.

52.—Spiritual seeing will no doubt be the method of seeing in a future state. The eyes of the Celestial body, being quickened and enlightened by the power and light of the Holy Ghost, will, at all times, be prepared to behold the wonderful works of God, and gaze upon the glories of the Universe. The eyes of mortality behold objects on this side of the veil, according to the

laws of natural light; the eyes of immortality will behold objects on both sides of the veil, according to the laws of both natural and spiritual light. And as the laws of spiritual light are immeasurably greater and more diversified in their range of operations, so spiritual eyes, adapted to these laws, will have their field of vision proportionably enlarged. Natural eyes now behold some few things in their gross and more tangible forms; spiritual eyes will then behold things in their more refined and recondite condition. Mortality beholds only some of the outward effects of nature; while immortality will look, not only upon the effects, but upon the causes also. The eyes of mortality view only the exterior or surfaces of bodies from which the natural light emanates; the eyes of immortality will pierce the interior also, and behold the minute, yet powerful workings of the elements from which the spiritual light emanates.

53.—In a future state, the capacities of the mind will be developed and enlarged, in proportion to the increased facilities for acquiring knowledge. An enlarged vision would be of but very little service, without a corresponding enlargement of the mind. But the same Spirit which quickens the eyes of the immortal body, will also quicken the immortal mind which inhabits that body. If the immortal eye, at one glance, can behold all the elements and particles of a world, with their infinitely varied operations, the immortal mind will be able to comprehend the scenery, and to remember the world of new ideas thus poured in upon it.

54.—The day is to come, when the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters do the great deep; when no man shall say to his neighbour, know ye the Lord, but all will know Him from the least unto the greatest. To prepare the way for that great day of knowledge, the Church of God must be restored in the latter days; the Saints in that Church must be filled with righteousness and with the Holy Ghost; the miraculous signs and Spiritual Gifts must be restored to them; and they must increase in these gifts and powers, more and more, until they grow up from babes and children in Christ to be perfect men in the kingdom. And when they have been sufficiently perfected by these gifts, and the wicked have all been destroyed out of the earth—then the Spirit of the Lord, as Joel predicted, will be poured out upon all flesh who are counted worthy to remain; and the whole earth, in that day, will be inhabited by Prophets, Seers, and Revelators, having dreams, visions, and heavenly powers; communing with angels, with glorified men, with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; gazing, by visions, upon heaven, and upon the heaven of heavens, that the knowledge of kingdoms, and glorified worlds may be multiplied upon them till they shall be overwhelmed with eternal light and truth, as the channels of the mighty deep are overwhelmed with the ocean floods.

55.—By visions, things unlawful to be uttered, have been shown to man. Indeed, things which were unutterable have been revealed and understood by the power of the Holy Ghost. Some might suppose that things which could be seen and understood while in the spirit, could be uttered or expressed to the understanding of others; but such is not always the case. There are many mysteries which, though they might be well understood by the light of the Spirit, yet could not be comprehended by the natural mind; for the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit; they are only to be spiritually discerned. Indeed there are many natural things, understood by the learned which are unutterable to the un-

learned. How could an algebraical problem be uttered or expressed to the understanding of one unacquainted with algebra? How could the intricate and profound problems, solved only by the aid of fluxional quantities, be uttered or expressed to the understanding of those wholly unacquainted with the higher calculus? It may, with the greatest propriety, be said, that the deep mysteries, unfolded by the powerful aid of the analytical calculus, are as inexpressible to the unlearned, as the profound mysteries of heavenly worlds, beheld in vision, would be to the natural man. No language could be so framed as to convey to him an understanding of what a spiritual man could easily comprehend by vision. To see naturally is a great gift; but to see spiritually is incomparably greater: the former is extremely limited in its field of vision; the latter pierces the Universe.

56.—Having, in this chapter, treated upon several of the most prominent Spiritual Gifts, the reader will be able to clearly discover the vast difference between the religion of heaven, as revealed in the Bible, and the false religions of the nineteenth century. He will perceive that the Bible religion of the ancients differs as much from Protestant and Catholic religions, as heaven differs from hell, or as the light of the noon-day sun differs from midnight darkness.

57.—Let me entreat you, dear reader, to compare ancient religion with the modern religions of Christendom. And you will not find the least resemblance in power, and scarcely any in form: the former is as much superior to the latter, as the most choice delicious food is to husks and chaff. Where can you find a church with the least Spiritual Gift, promised in the word of God? Where can you find one of the miraculous signs promised to believers? Where can you find the Revelator, or the Prophet, or the inspired Translator, or the Seer with his Urim and Thummin? Where can you find the man of God who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, can see visions or dream dreams, or interpret the same by inspiration? Where are your inspired men, your speakers with unknown tongues, your inspired interpreters, your discerners of spirits or beholders of angels, your elders to heal the sick, your men of God to control the powers of nature? Modern Christianity answers, NOWHERE; they are not to be found among the Catholic, Greek, or the Protestant churches. All are as dead in regard to the promised Spiritual Gifts, as the putrid carcases, mouldering in their cemeteries.

58.—Do you inquire, dear reader, whether there is a Church on the whole earth who believes in, and prays for, and enjoys these great Bible blessings? We humbly reply, Yes. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is such a Church, and the only Church who has the Bible religion with its forms, its ordinances, its commandments, its blessings, and its heavenly powers. Do you desire, with all your heart, to enjoy the society of the people of God, and be made a partaker with them of these Spiritual Gifts? If you do, remember that there is no way only for you to obey, with an honest heart, the Gospel, as clearly set forth in the first four chapters of this series. If you do this, you shall be saved; if you do it not, you cannot escape damnation; for this is the firm decree of Him who cannot lie.

